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ABSTRACT

A practicum was designed to motivate children to read and to read for pleasure. Since reading is considered an important part of the daily curriculum of an elementary school and spills over into every discipline taught, reading appears to be a key to success in all curriculum areas. An in-class model for delivering remedial assistance was used with 39 third-grade students. The goal of the practicum was that students express joy in reading and choose to read when given encouragement, choice in reading material, and time to read. Emphasis was placed on looking at the whole child from many different perspectives. Since there is never just one solution to a problem of lack of motivation, the desire was to incorporate many suggestions gleaned from the literature to design a holistic solution to the problem. A club theme was the umbrella under which many other parts of the program developed--parent involvement, self-esteem, writing, and performing. As a result of the practicum, students were reading with renewed interest and expressed this interest to teachers and parents. They responded positively on a reading survey and wrote positive remarks in their journals. (Contains 40 references and two tables of data; appendixes present a reading attitude inventory, a guide to journal response, student-parent contracts, a storytelling guide, reading log sheets, and other material associated with the club theme.) (Author/RS)

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ED 369 039

Improve the Reading Motivation of Third-Grade Children with Extra Time, Encouragement and Choice

by

Ina Sue Harrison

Cluster 58

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A Practicum I Report Presented to the Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

1994

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Ina Sue Harrison under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

May 9, 1994
Date of Final Approval of Report

Georgianna Lowen
Georgianna Lowen, Ed. D.,
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ABSTRACT

Improving the Reading Motivation of Third-Grade Children with Extra Time, Encouragement and Choice. Harrison, Ina S., 1994: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies.

This practicum was designed to motivate children to read and to read for pleasure. Since reading is considered an important part of the daily curriculum of an elementary school and spills over into every discipline taught, reading seems to be a key to success in all curriculum areas. Therefore, the goal of this practicum was that students express joy in reading and choose to read when given encouragement, choice in reading material, and time to read.

Emphasis was placed on looking at the whole child from many different perspectives. Since there is never just one solution to a problem of lack of motivation, the desire was to incorporate many suggestions gleaned from literature to design a holistic solution to the problem. A club theme was the umbrella under which many other parts of the program developed--parent involvement, self esteem, writing, and performing.

As a result of the practicum, students were reading with renewed interest and expressed this interest to teachers and parents. They responded positively on a reading survey and wrote positive remarks in their journals.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The school, located in a rural community in the Southeast, is the largest elementary school in the county system. It has a population of 525 students with a ratio of 80% white and 20% minority. The socioeconomic level of the students' families is mixed, ranging from professional families to those below the poverty level.

The major industry in the county consists of several clothing manufacturers, a chemical plant, a fiberglass plant, and a large chicken processing plant. These are the primary employers of families in the county. A community hospital draws many medical professionals to the area, but the school system is probably the largest employer of professionals. Seven elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school employ hundreds of teachers.

The writer's school, established in 1932, has a long successful history of community support. The original facility was built through the cooperative efforts of members of the community. The structure remained unchanged for years. About ten years ago, the school, due to the condition of the building, was in danger of being closed by the county administrators. As a result of pressure from the community, the school district was rezoned to increase the school population rather than close the building. Then funds were made available through a bond referendum to rebuild the structure One section at a time of the building was replaced by a new and much larger facility; the school was never closed during the construction. Two years after construction was completed the school was bursting at the seams. The area continued to grow.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The school population targeted by the writer was two third-grade classes from a total of five. The writer used an in-class model for delivering remedial assistance and worked with 39 students. She teamed with two teachers whom she refers to as the "host teachers." The writer, a Remedial Education Program (REP) teacher, worked within the guidelines of the county to deliver remedial assistance to students identified by a standardized test as

needing remedial assistance in reading, math, or both. These students were never pulled out or stigmatized in any way as being less able to succeed. Instead, the writer focused herself to be ever conscious of their unique needs and to help them function well in their heterogeneous class.

The writer grew up in the county and graduated from both elementary and high schools in the system. She has an undergraduate degree from a university on the west coast in Home Economics, but her graduate work in education has been here in the Southeast. She has a masters in elementary and middle school education and is also certified to teach gifted students.

The writer taught fourth grade for ten years in the school from which she is presently employed as a remedial teacher. She has taught fourteen years.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The problem identified by the writer was the ineffectual value placed on reading by third-grade students. They seldom read for pleasure. Many of the students entering third grade were not motivated to read and, therefore, read poorly. Remedial help was needed to complete assignments satisfactorily. Children did not read silently when given the opportunity, and they often failed to read assigned lessons. Books checked out to classes were not used by all the students.

Problem Documentation

The evidence of the problem was that 12 out of 39 students were on the remedial reading list identified by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills which meant that these students did not read as well as their peers. The second-grade teachers interviewed by the writer

said that many students did not use free reading time to read. The Special Instructional Assistance (SIA) teacher's observations supported the writer's conclusion that students did not read when given the opportunity nor did they use the reading center books as frequently as would be desired. An attitude inventory given to the 39 students revealed that out of the 273 total responses 82 were negative, 33 were undecided, and 158 were positive. The questions, taken from an inventory by Campbell (1991), may be viewed in Table 1 along with the results.

Table 1

Information From The Reading Attitude Inventory

	Positive	Undecided	Negative
1. How do you feel about reading books for fun at home?	24	4	11
2. How do you feel when you are asked to read out loud to a group?	21	7	11
3. How do you feel when you are asked to read out loud to the teacher?	20	6	13
4. How do you feel when you come to a new word while reading?	22	3	14
5. How do you feel about how well you can read?	25	4	10

6. How do you think your friends feel about reading?	25	4	10
7. How do you think you friends feel when you read out loud?	21	5	13

Causative Analysis

The causes of the problem of lack of motivation to read in some cases was due to a poor self-concept. Students did not feel good about their ability to read, so they preferred not to read. Many had not been read to often by teachers or parents. Some had been taught by skill-based methods and had experienced failure and lower teacher expectations. Others had not been given a purpose to make reading exciting or rewarding.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Information from literature on the topic of poor motivation reveals that the problem often starts at home with few language experiences. Parents spend more time watching television than communicating with their children, and often books and magazines are not a part of the home environment. At school, teachers who concentrate on teaching how to read rather than why read are not motivationally influencing the children (Trelease, 1985). They are

not conveying to the children the joy related to reading.

Literature reveals that support teachers often fail to coordinate their plans with the regular classroom teacher (Stringfield, Billing & Davis, l991). Planning time together is essential in order to work in harmony. Slavin (1991) suggests that pull-out programs cause disruptions in children's regular classroom instruction, so two teachers working together would be preferable.

Low self-esteem is not often addressed in meeting the needs of at-risk students (Young, 1991). Students are not made to feel good about themselves or what they can do. Focus is too often aimed at what a student fails to do rather than what the student has done well.

Parents are not being used as partners in the teaching process. Teaching activities do not include the school, home, and neighborhood as suggested by Davis (1991). Most school parental-involvement programs engage only a small number of parents who already support the school. These parents are usually the ones with motivated children, and their children benefit most from the parent's participation.

Teaching methods often do not fit the needs of students, and the schools have resources that traditionally have not been fully utilized. These resources are: dedicated teachers and

administrators who care, young children who have not experienced anything that would contradict their positive self-image, and parents who are able and willing to support activities of the school (Madden, Slavin, Karweit, Dolan, & Wasik, 1991).

Incentive programs designed for less skilled readers often miss the targeted group and are more effective at motivating readers who are already experiencing success (Ford & Ohlhausen, 1988). Sometimes the incentive programs are designed to make poor readers feel the goals are unattainable.

Students will not work in classes that fail to satisfy their needs or make them feel important academically. The need for power is the core to almost all school problems according to William Glasser when interviewed by Gough (1987).

In teacher directed classrooms, children do not feel their ideas are valued. They see the teacher as having all the right answers; thus, sharing is difficult (Tiballi & Drake, 1993). Too often short answers are given without taking time to discuss or elaborate. The wait time may be insufficient to encourage students to think.

Teachers sometimes depower themselves by the labels they put on children. Wilkinson (1989) says that calling a child "capable but lazy," "aggressive," or "a behavior problem" doesn't help provide a learning program for that child. Labeling should be eliminated, and

teachers should concentrate on the positive rather than on the negative when working with children. They will usually give you what you expect, whether it be success or failure.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

Reading was considered an important part of the daily curriculum of an elementary student. Reading spilled over into every discipline taught. With reading as the key to success in all curriculum areas, the goal of this practicum was for students to enjoy reading and to choose reading when given encouragement, choice in reading material, and time to read.

Expected Outcomes

As an outcome of this practicum, the writer's prospective was to see children reading and enjoying reading. She expected students to express their feelings to her in reading journals.

Measurement of Outcome

The three objectives used to measure the outcomes of the practicum were as follows:

1. During a 12 week implementation period, 35 of the 39 participating students will record a minimum of five 20 minute-a-day reading entries in their reading log.
2. At least 30 of the 39 students answering the post reading attitude inventory will respond by checking the happy face on 5 out of the 7 questions, which will be an indicator of positive feelings toward reading.
3. All of the 39 students will read at least one reading-center book weekly. Their participation will be monitored by checking the reading log and journal.

The writer was to keep a log of unforeseen events and reactions which would prove to be valuable in studying the outcomes. This log would help her remember things that sometimes seemed insignificant at the time but were important in the final analysis.

The writer was looking for indicators that proved the children were reading when given time, choice, and encouragement. In order to analyze the results, she planned to look at the outcomes on the

post inventory (see Appendix A) and use observations--both personal and those of the host teachers. The students' log entries and journal entries were also to be considered when looking at the results. Students were instructed to make a final journal entry describing in the student's own words their feelings about reading. Some questions were to be written on the board to guide individual responses (see Appendix B).

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The writer reviewed a wide variety of literature searching for the particular ingredient to encourage reluctant readers to read when given a choice of activities. The search led her though a network of suggestions, all focused on improving the reading program. The ideas the writer selected could be combined or used separately to add a quality of interest and appeal to the reading program .

Trelease (1989) referred to the read-aloud approach as book commercials. Children readily remember commercials and repeat catchy phrases, increasing listening comprehension, which, according to Trelease, comes before reading comprehension. If a child has not heard the word, he/she will not likely read the word. Hearing books read aloud encourages children to read the books they

have heard or choose others by the same author or topic.

To make the most of read-aloud time, Freeman (1992) makes some worthwhile suggestions. She says to choose a book that you yourself like before attempting to read aloud to others. Read through the book ahead of time so that you will use appropriate expression. The rule of thumb is to ask no questions at all rather than make students dredge up tedious answers. Arrange the seats in a way that everyone can see the details in the pictures. This closeness fosters a community feeling.

Inviting guests to the class to read orally can also be extremely motivating when children are given the opportunity to write the invitations and participate in the planning. On the day of the reader's visit, the student who invited the guest may choose a friend to go with him/her to the office to act as escorts from the office to the room. The escorts then introduce the visitor to the class. Such an activity builds self-esteem as the students bask in the special attention from their visitor (Lupton, 1988).

Storytelling, like reading aloud, is an opportunity for a child to share the gift of time with a caring adult or friend according to Kies, Rodriguez, and Granato (1993). The child, by becoming the storyteller, is provided an opportunity to learn language through using language. Hearing a story can, in turn, create a motivation to

read. Telling a story requires a child to apply logical thinking, sequencing, and cause and effect reasoning.

Teachers are encouraged to unlock the storyteller in every child by helping him/her choose, learn, and tell a story. By storytelling a child can bring a book to life and gain language skills that is his/her skill forever as suggested by Hamilton and Weiss (1991). Children love storytelling and will work diligently to prepare for such an assignment.

Teaching resources designed as instructional techniques to motivate children to read were compiled by Johns, Davis, Barnhart, Moss, and Wheat (1991). These lesson plans offer suggestions to help children discover the fun involved in becoming literate. The activities are designed to encourage and improve reading, oral language, and writing by simple techniques that add a little spice to reading. Parental involvement is encouraged by these authors, and they give suggestions on how to involve parents.

Mutual goal setting and communication between parents and teachers keep parents involved in helping with homework. Dialog with parents, rather than monologue, is established through carefully planned efforts. Schurr (1993) emphasizes a partnership philosophy between parents and teachers to create a feeling of mutual ownership in the education of children. Building support

bonds between children, teachers, and parents is a key to successful parental assistance programs in the school. Once parents realize that they have powerful and meaningful roles, the word will get out in the community and more parents will show an interest (Bodkin, 1992).

By writing and illustrating books in a workshop setting, Melton (1985) has awakened the hidden talents in many students who did not believe in their own abilities. His secret is to captivate and involve students in writing and illustrating their own books. He managed his class like a business, and everyone was a vital link to the success of his publishing company. Melton suggests that teachers ignore preconceived notions about students and plan activities to encourage students to use both the academic and creative brain.

Students are encouraged to keep reflective journals or dialog journals in order to make a reading and writing connection. By putting thoughts, feelings, and ideas into words through writing, students will extend their reading experience according to Haste, Short, and Burke (1992) .

The writing connection may also be made using a word processing computer program. Such a program can be used successfully by teachers to extend resourcefully planned activities

in a whole language setting as described by Williams and Hoover (1991). This program will require more planning on the part of the teacher than programs with game formats but will yield desirable results.

Surrounding children with literature that interests them is a wonderful way to draw children into books. Books displayed in an inviting way and referred to often in conversation spur the interests of students. When teachers have time to learn students' likes and dislikes, teachers can use the information as a guide in selecting books as well as in planning lesson themes (Graves, 1990).

Reading multicultural books helps students learn more about the diverse world around them and how much they can achieve by working together. Children have a natural curiosity about cultural differences that can be satisfied through reading. Rogers and Lemay (1991) suggest that multicultural awareness through literature involves students and cements relationships.

Teachers of at-risk students are encouraged by McCarney (1991) to use his suggestions to help improve their reading skills. His suggestions are to provide a quiet place for reading; to tape stories and books; to arrange for peer tutors; to reduce the emphasis on competition; to provide a selection of reading material in varying ability levels; to set up a system of tangible and intangible

motivational stimuli; and to highlight or underline important points before students read. These ideas need to be posted in a plan book or desk pad to be remembered and used when working with at-risk students.

In a collection of 60 creators of favorite children's books, Kovacs and Preller (1991) present many ideas to spark writing and drawing projects. These projects are exciting and will whet a child's appetite for reading. This collection tells about the author's background and humanizes the author, which interests children.

The writer thinks that the combined use of whole language and the basal reader can be beneficial to students. Such a combination allows teachers to extend their lessons better than using one approach alone. Cochran (1989) writes that one way to give students the most comprehensive instruction is to select techniques from all three approaches--whole language, literature, and basal. The merging of the three, along with creative teaching practices, should reap delightful results.

Through cooperative activities in the classroom, students share their talents and skills in a way that benefits everyone. Students seem to become more intrinsically motivated when they are allowed to work together (Kohn, 1987). Children enjoy working together and perform much better when using cooperative activities.

Teachers who have taught cooperatively seldom go back to teaching competitively or individually.

Reluctant readers will read if given a minimum time goal and a visible display to show progress (Norton, 1992). Her reading incentive program encourages students to read at home and at school. Awards and prizes are dispersed periodically to keep interest high. Another incentive program uses a club theme as a means of removing the stigma of receiving remedial reading (Carwile and Parker, 1990). Contests and prizes are used in the club theme, as in Norton's incentive program, and positive results are usually immediate.

A Reading Workshop was conducted by Swift (1993) in which students were given the choice of books they wanted to read, were allowed time to read, and were given an avenue for sharing their thoughts and feelings about books through dialog journals. This year-long study was conducted at the sixth-grade level, but third-grade teachers in Swift's school tried Reading Workshop with equal success.

Playwriting, as suggested by Rycik (1990), affords students an opportunity to use their creative writing skills and enhances their imagination. Her step-by-step directions allow students to write and produce their own plays. Rycik suggests that students divide

into small groups and brainstorm for ideas. They are to consider characters, settings, or situations that could be made into plays. She explains that what happens in a play is the plot. The plot has a beginning, middle, and ending. After the groups form ideas for their plays, they are ready to develop the characters. Cooperatively, members of each group list the characters in their play and describe each character. Next, the groups work together to draw a large picture of various scenes in the plays. Students then write their plays in small chunks--one scene at a time. The editing step is often painful for children, so Rycik suggests giving children colored markers or pencils for the editing and rewriting. Then comes the most exciting part--the production--when everything comes together and the results are expressed.

Another perspective, inertia as it relates to reading, is discussed by Rasinski (1989). Inertia refers to the property by which a body in motion tends to remain in motion, and a body at rest tends to remain at rest. He suggests that some students who are able to read choose not to read. These students are not motivated and, according to the inertia theory, are at rest. Students will begin and continue to read if they are involved in using activities that encourage reading. This theory gives validity to the use of numerous techniques. If a student starts reading on a regular basis,

perhaps he/she will continue to read.

Description of Selected Solution

After reviewing the literature, the writer placed her emphasis on looking at the whole child from many different perspectives. There was never just one solution to a problem but numerous solutions. The writer's desire was to incorporate many of the suggestions gleaned from literature to design a holistic approach to the problem of children who do not choose to read.

As a result of the ideas generated by the research, the writer focused on building the students' self-esteem through meeting needs and encouraging respect to be shown to others. When working in cooperative groups with assigned roles, one student was assigned the duty of encouraging and praising all students in the group.

The writer planned for children to read at home, using a variety of reading materials. In class, she preferred that children use the books displayed in the reading center. The books for use in the reading center were selected on a variety of reading levels, and the topics were related to the lessons being taught.

The computer was used to extend and enrich writing, and the writing assignments became much more exciting when computers were used. Spell Check and Word Find were two tools that made

writing easier during the editing process. Since the lab was not available daily, rarely was anything except the final draft of the paper keyed on the computer.

Parents were encouraged to become involved in building literacy skills, and their support was needed in many ways. Parents were invited to participate in activities in class and at home. Since they co-signed reading contracts, they became responsible for encouraging reading at home.

Reading should be thought of as fun; therefore, books were presented in ways that made each book journey new and exciting, and children were surrounded with a variety of books. Activities and literature responses were reflections of different interests and learning styles. Some children responded to books through role play, mime, songs, art, or storytelling; others may have talked about their book on a one-to-one basis--whatever was most comfortable for the child.

The basal is still an integral part of the teaching of reading, but the basal paired with whole language made reading so much more interesting for the children. The pairing of the two methods gave students choices of reading materials including multicultural books. Children were able to read on a level comparable to their ability.

The writer incorporated the ideas of building self-esteem,

using a variety of books, involving parents, and responding to books by developing center activities with a reading club theme. Carwile and Parker (1990) described using the club theme with only remedial students; however, the club theme was believed to be just as successful with heterogeneous grouping in centers. Many students who can read well do not choose to read; so the club theme proved to be motivational to all.

In order to provide an opportunity for the slower, less capable readers to succeed, a twenty-minute time goal was set rather than a required number of books to read. Reading short, easy books in order to read the highest number was not encouraged, as in competitive situations; however, many did read short books because that was what they were comfortable reading. Student reading efforts were continually encouraged by a display in the hall showing the extensive number of books read by the members of the two classes. The classes did not officially compete but watched their chain lengthen and took pride in their own class efforts. The chain consisted of a strip of paper folded and stapled to form a link on which the book, author, and reader was written.

The club theme was carried out in the individual rooms through center activities. Each student had an opportunity to visit a club center once a week. All parents were invited as a group at least

twice during the project; a breakfast meeting at the beginning and a celebration at the end to bring closure was planned. Individual parents were welcome to come whenever their child was doing something they wanted to see. Video tapes were made available for students to check out and take home to be viewed by their parents--a way to share in the experience of reading or performing.

For the practicum to work smoothly, the writer planned with the two third-grade host teachers to make sure all requirements and needs were met. Center time was interdisciplinary, so some coordination was required in order for everything to fit together cohesively. Contracts for the parents and students (see Appendix C), membership cards (see Appendix D), and chain links for reading records (see Appendix E) were printed and ready for use after the first breakfast meeting.

Report of Action Taken

The writer was responsible for the club center one hour each day in each of the two classrooms she served as a REP teacher. There were four other centers, and the writer often moved around monitoring all centers along with the host teacher.

The first week was taken up with administrative responsibilities of collecting contracts and distributing journals,

log sheets, and membership pins . Students were given directions for keeping reading logs and dialog journals. The dialog journals were used for sharing feelings and thoughts about reading club activities with the writer.

Storytelling was the first activity. The writer dressed like Mother Goose and told the story of Rumpelstiltskin. The students were then given the opportunity to select books containing fairy tales, tall tales, or adventure stories to read with the purpose of telling the story. They were given several tips (see Appendix F) to make storytelling easier. After students were given time to read and practice, they told their stories and were video taped by a parent volunteer. The tape was made available for parents to view at home.

To add a little excitement to reading biographies, which could be a little dull, the writer introduced the books in a locked trunk. Students became very excited about the possibility of rambling through the old trunk to find a book to read.

Other centers were planned to complement the biography theme. One center was set up to brief students on the correct interview technique. The students who had been briefed on interview techniques were later scheduled to interview various teachers or administrators. They were allowed to use recorders for

their interviews to help them remember enough information to write a biographical sketch easily. Each group worked together to write about the person they interviewed and a parent volunteer helped them edit their writing. The final copy was keyed on the computer. All the writings from both classes were bound and displayed in the library.

Listening tapes with biographies were in the listening center for students needing help in reading. An art center for making silhouettes was available as a choice, but was not assigned. A time-line center, manned by a parent volunteer, was assigned to allow the students to visualize the time span between the people they read about in the biographies. The volunteer helped students correctly place a stick figure on the time line.

The focus of the following weeks was drama. A variety of plays was exibited for students to select and read before making a performance choice. Students were encouraged to take play books home to read with family members. They were given the choice of writing a play from stories told earlier or using one already written. One group decided to write a play. All the others chose plays from those they read. After the selections were made, students began seriously practicing for a performance before the Christmas holidays. The plays were ready by the last week of school.

Invitations were sent to parents and several other classes. The response was gratifying, and the children were thrilled with their performance. The plays were video taped for parents who could not come.

The new year started with a poetry unit. To introduce the unit, the writer rolled a cart decorated like a street vendor's cart into the room, but this one was filled with poetry books. She read poetry aloud to the class and showed examples of different kinds of poetry on the overhead projector. The cart with the books was shared by two classes, so it was left in the hall. This gave students the opportunity to peruse a number of poetry books at their convenience. They chose a favorite poem to key on the computer to make a display for the wall in the hallway. After becoming familiar with different styles of poetry, students wrote an original poem. These poems were judged by a team of teachers, and five winners were chosen. The winning writers were each awarded a book, and the poems selected were to be entered in the state poetry contest.

The last two weeks were devoted to the reading of Peggy Parrish's books about "Amelia Bedelia." Everyone seemed to enjoy this zany character and read several of her books. For follow-up activities students participated in an art project and a puppet show, and made displays of idioms for the bulletin board and hallway.

On the last day of the project a literacy celebration was planned with parents invited as well as the character acting as Amelia Bedelia. Breakfast was served to the students and guests before the program, at which time students were able to meet and talk with Amelia Bedelia. Awards (see Appendix G) and books were given to students participating in the project, and a thesaurus was presented to five students who read the most books. A staff writer from the local paper made pictures to go along with an interview she conducted earlier about the project.

Most of the books used as gifts and prizes were donated by Reading is Fundamental (RIF). A request was made by the writer to enroll her students in the "Open Book Program," but they did not qualify. However, enough books were sent to give every student two books during this motivational project.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

Three objectives were used to measure the outcomes of this practicum intent on improving the motivation of third-grade students to read when given extra time, encouragement, and choice. The problem addressed was the ineffectual value placed on reading by large numbers of students. Poor reading skills and lack of motivation seemed to go hand in hand. High goals were set by the writer to encourage students to work up to higher expectations.

The first objective was as follows: "during a 12 week implementation period 35 of the 39 participating students will record a minimum of five 20-minutes-a-day reading entries in their reading logs." This objective was not achieved as stated for the writer failed to allow for students moving away. Four students moved and a fifth student withdrew for a month during a family illness and returned later to rejoin the class. Keeping records to

meet this objective were difficult, so as time passed, the writer used some short cuts to make the task easier for the students. They did not seem to be developmentally ready for such an analytical responsibility. The writer gave the students log sheets (see Appendix H) with the dates already recorded. All the student had to do was place a check by the date. When the books were completed, they were recorded on the chain link display. Only 31 of the 39 students were able to finish the project reading 20 minutes a day. If the numbers were adjusted to account for student transition the resulting number, 31 out of 35, would fulfill my goal. The student who moved away for a month kept recording her reading time.

Again, the second ambitious objective was not met as stated: "At least 30 of the 39 students answering the attitude inventory will respond by checking the happy face on 5 out of the 7 questions, which will be an indication of positive feelings toward reading." The number completing the project was 35, and 27 answered with happy faces five or more times out of seven. With allowances made for student slippage, the objective was very nearly met. Although students made the effort expected, the writer learned much about stating objectives and will, in the future, allow for student slippage. The first inventory with 39 students showed 158 positive responses out of 273. The final inventory with 35 students showed

196 positive out of 245 responses. The results of the two inventories may be viewed in Table 3.

Table 3

Reading Inventory Comparison

Pretest		
Positive	Undecided	Negative
158	33	82

Posttest		
Positive	Undecided	Negative
196	19	30

The third objective was not met as stated. "All of the 39 students will read from at least one reading center book weekly. Participation will be monitored by checking reading logs and journals." Of the 35 students completing the project, all but the one student who moved away for a short time met this requirement. The reading center books were a part of the weekly lesson plan which made this objective attainable if the writer had allowed for transitory students.

Discussion

The reading club theme was carried out to create a positive feeling for reading and to give students a cooperative team

approach--each encouraging the other. The positive atmosphere and element of surprise brought by the club helped initiate positive reactions to reading. The club approach gave more time to reading rather than learning skills. Fielding and Pearson (1994) recommend that the time set aside for reading instruction be more than the combined total allocated for learning about reading and talking or writing about what has been read. Reading for the pleasure of reading was one of the writer's goals. However, simply allocating the time was not enough. Each week students were reading with a purpose such as storytelling, selecting a favorite play or poem, or reading to learn about an interesting person from the past. Storytelling was one unit that required rereading, which led to greater fluency and comprehension. Another element incorporated was choice. This element was directly related to interest and motivation and led to learning.

The computer was a motivating element that was integrated into the club activities frequently as extensions to reading. Students showed more interest in writing when they knew they would be keying the final copy on the computer. According to Kozma and Johnston (1991) students in a computer writing class developed a new interest and enthusiasm for writing. By using computers to write, they wrote papers that were almost twice as long, showed a

greater development of ideas, and exhibited a greater sense of audience.

In the past it has been difficult to get parents of the at-risk children involved in school activities. The writer's first meeting was not well attended because the children were not directly involved, but the latter two were phenomenal because the children were involved--performing or receiving awards. The key to getting parents involved is through the children. At the final meeting only a small number of children were in the puppet show, but many parents came to see their child receive an award for reading. Apparently, the interest and excitement of the child was the motive. From this experience the writer believes that parents will become involved if students are truly interested.

The club theme and the center approach seemed to fit together well in establishing a motivational approach. The club theme, carried out in a center approach, gave the writer time to model reading, which is sometimes an experience that the disadvantaged get too little of according to Willis (1993). Many teachers bypass strategies such as choral reading and recorded books and go directly to sustained silent reading before the children are competent readers. Many students, even after twelve weeks, still need modeling for reading with expression, pauses, and voice

fluctuations.

By modeling reading in small groups, helping choose appropriate books, giving time for reading, and offering encouragement, the writer was able to motivate children to read and keep them reading. The small group made such motivation techniques manageable. When a teacher tries to teach something to the entire class at the same time, "chances are, one-third of the kids already know it; one-third will get it; and the remaining third won't. Some two-thirds of the class are wasting their time" according to Willis (l993). The approach used by the writer was more developmentally appropriate than the traditional. The center time gave students time to discuss their work with peers, and it gave them a social and emotional outlet.

Recommendations

One recommendation is to require less record keeping by the third-grade child. Keeping a log proved to be difficult for the group with which the writer was working; this may have been due to the population in this project or the age group in general. The writer believes that when a child is developmentaliy ready for this kind of record keeping, he/she will not require as much prodding as was required for the first half of this project. She would suggest check

lists or better still, find a computer program such as "The Accelerated Reader" to keep records of children's reading. Since the emphasis was reading and not analytical skills, the record keeping was shortened to a check sheet at the project's mid-point.

Another recommendation is to spend more time on each unit. With additional time, many more activities could be incorporated into each unit.

Dissemination

The results of the practicum have been shared in at least two ways. The writer was interviewed by the staff writer of the local paper and, in the interview, gave a complete description of her practicum. The staff writer made pictures at the awards breakfast.

Since the county curriculum director was a participant in the awards breakfast, she saw firsthand the enthusiasm of the students and parents and asked that the formula for success be shared at the next county Chapter 1/ REP meeting. Parental involvement has been a goal for at-risk programs for some time.

As a member of the leadership team for the school, the writer plans to share the goals and objectives, solution strategies, and results of her practicum to fellow teachers during a teacher-work day. Ten staff development hours are required each year, and this

could possibly apply toward staff development hours. Teachers usually prefer learning strategies that have been successfully used within the school.

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APPENDIX A

READING ATTITUDE INVENTORY

READING ATTITUDE INVENTORY

1. How do you feel about reading books for fun at home?

2. How do you feel when you are asked to read out loud to a group?

3. How do you feel when you are asked to read out loud to the teacher?

4. How do you feel when you come to a new word while reading?

5. How do you feel about how well you can read?

6. How do you think your friends feel about reading?

7. How do you think your friends feel when you read out loud?

APPENDIX B

GUIDE TO JOURNAL RESPONSE

GUIDE TO JOURNAL RESPONSE

1. Did you enjoy the reading activities of the past twelve weeks? Why or why not?

2. What did you enjoy most? Explain.

3. What did you enjoy least? Explain.

4. What would you suggest to make reading more fun?

5. If you could be the teacher for a week, what would you plan to do in reading?

6. What would you like to tell me to help me become a better reading teacher?

APPENDIX C

STUDENT-PARENT CONTRACTS

MY "TMAD" READING CONTRACT

I_____would like to be a member of TMAD. I know that reading is important and I want to read the required twenty-minutes-a-day in order to become a member. I will ask my Mom, Dad, or Grandparent to sign my contract with me. They will agree to help and encourage me for the next twelve weeks to read the twenty-minutes-a-day.

My signature_____

Mom, Dad, or Grandparent's

signature_____

APPENDIX D

MEMBERSHIP CARDS

_____	_____
is a member of TMAD	is a member of TMAD
_____	_____
is a member of TMAD	is a member of TMAD
_____	_____
is a member of TMAD	is a member of TMAD
_____	_____
is a member of TMAD	is a member of TMAD
_____	_____
is a member of TMAD	is a member of TMAD

APPENDIX E

CHAIN LINKS

Reader_____Book_____

Author_____Pages_____

Reader_____Book_____

Author_____Pages_____

Reader_____Book_____

Author_____Pages_____

Reader_____Book_____

Author_____Pages_____

Reader_____Book_____

Author_____Pages_____

Reader_____Book_____

Author_____Pages_____

Reader_____Book_____

Author_____Pages_____

Reader_____Book_____

Author_____Pages_____

APPENDIX F

STORYTELLING GUIDE

A GUIDE TO STORYTELLING

To prepare for storytelling follow these steps:

1. Read at least five stories before choosing one to tell.
2. Read the story over and over again. Tape the story and listen to yourself read.
3. Become so familiar with your character that you live the part.
4. Make a pictorial outline of the story in order to have a clear idea of the sequence.
5. Tell the story in your own words. Don't try to memorize it.
6. Practice telling your story to a mirror or to a stuffed animal.
7. Speak loud enough to be heard by everyone.

APPENDIX G

AWARD FOR READING

is a howling success

at

reading.

APPENDIX H

READING LOG SHEET

MY READING LOG

Date		